

## SECTION 4.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section documents the environmental analysis for those parameters which the proposed project may or would result in potentially significant adverse impacts. These parameters were identified in the findings of the Initial Study (IS) which was included as part of the Notice of Preparation (NOP). Environmental subjects not included in this section can be found in Section 3.0 (Effects Found Not To Be Significant). The NOP and IS are included in Appendix A of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Each environmental parameter is discussed in the following manner.

**Environmental Setting** describes the existing conditions in the environment in the vicinity of the project, as it exists before the commencement of the project, and at the time of preparation of the Initial Study, to provide a baseline for comparing “before the project” and “after the project” environmental conditions.

**Thresholds Used to Determine Level of Impact** define and list specific criteria used to determine whether an impact is or is not considered to be potentially significant. The *CEQA Guidelines*; local, state, federal or other standards applicable to that impact category; and officially established thresholds of significance are the major sources used in identifying criteria appropriate to the specifics of the project, because “... an ironclad definition of significant effect is not possible because the significance of an activity may vary with setting” (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15064[b]). Principally, “... a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within an area affected by the project, including land, air, water, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance” constitutes a significant impact (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15382).

**Methodology** briefly describes how the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project related to each environmental parameter were identified and assessed.

**Environmental Impact** presents evidence, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, about the cause and effect relationship between the proposed project and the potential changes in the environment that would be caused by the project. The exact magnitude, duration, extent, frequency, range or other parameters of a potential impacts are ascertained to the extent possible to provide facts in support of finding the impact to be or not to be significant. In determining whether an impact may be significant, all the potential impacts, including direct impacts, reasonably foreseeable indirect impacts, and considerable contributions to cumulative impacts (see Section 8.0), were considered.

**Mitigation Measures** identify the means by which an adverse project related impact could be reduced or avoided in cases where the EIR analysis determined such impact to be significant or potentially significant. Standard existing regulations, requirements and procedures that are applied to all similar projects were taken into account in identifying what additional project-specific mitigation may be needed to reduce significant adverse project impacts. Mitigation, in addition to measures that the lead agency will implement, can also include measures that are

within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15091[a][2]).

**Level of Significance after Mitigation** indicates what adverse impact, if any, will remain after application of mitigation measures and whether the remaining impacts are or are not considered significant. When an adverse impact, even with the inclusion of mitigation measures, cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance, it is identified as an “unavoidable significant adverse impact.” To approve a project with significant unavoidable adverse impacts, the lead agency must adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC). In adopting an SOC, the lead agency must find that it has reviewed the EIR, has balanced the benefits of the project against its significant adverse impacts and has concluded that the benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts, and therefore, the adverse environmental impacts may be considered acceptable (*CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15093[a]).

Sections 4.2 to 4.12 discuss the assessment of the potential for both short term (construction) and long term (operational) impacts of the proposed West Gateway Project as follows:

- 4.2 Aesthetics
- 4.3 Air Quality
- 4.4 Cultural Resources
- 4.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- 4.6 Hydrology and Water Quality
- 4.7 Land Use
- 4.8 Noise
- 4.9 Population and Housing
- 4.10 Recreation
- 4.11 Transportation and Circulation
- 4.12 Utilities and Service Systems